

Milwaukee Ham Raises Antarctica

By PHILIP BERGLUND

"W-9-George-Peter-Ida calling Kansas City-4- Uncle Sugar-Victor."

Almost every night around 11 this message emanates from a powerful transmitter pointing 186 degrees from 4331 N. Wildwood Av.

And if the conditions are right (they usually are at this time of year), the answer comes bouncing back across 18,000 miles: "This is K-C-4-U-S-V at McMurdo Sound. Hello W-9-G-P-I."

RETIRED ENGINEER

This contact several nights ago was one of the more than 1,300 which Jack Doyle, retired engineer and car dealer, has had with stations in Antarctica since he raised Operation Deep Freeze I back in 1955.

Since then he has regularly communicated with the seven United States outposts at Little America, Marie Byrd Land, Cape Adare, the geographic South Pole, the Knox Coast, the Weddell sea and McMurdo Sound.

Doyle, an amateur radio operator since shortly after World War I, said about 50% of his efforts to contact Antarctica have been successful.

He explained in his deep voice, which sounds as if it might carry a great part of the distance to McMurdo Sound without benefit of radio, that this is the best time of the year for communicating with that end of the world.

This is Antarctica's summer and good weather will probably be enjoyed there until Jan. 1 or thereabouts.

The conversations can be of a very serious nature, as when a plane is down and is sending distress signals, but more often, they are as prosaic as any across the back fence.

SAMPLE SMALL TALK

Take for example this small talk between a Ft. Worth, Texas, woman and a Grand Rapids, Mich., sailor while Doyle was awaiting his turn to talk:

"Is it cold down there?"

"Not bad. It's about 15 above right now but it'll probably get down to zero soon." (It was only a few degrees warmer in Milwaukee.)

hours, and off for 12 hours ... There's a lot to do."

"Don't you get bored?"

Here the sailor admitted he'd only been there 10 days. Doyle remarked that by the time 10 months of his 15 or 18 months of duty had passed he'd be plenty ready to come home.

The sailor said the men, about 170 at McMurdo Sound, had a Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings including white tablecloths. Thanksgiving Day in Antarctica fell on Wednesday here because of a 15-hour time difference.

Amateurs like Doyle are often asked to contact a friend or relatives of one of the men serving at the South Pole. When possible, they arrange a "phone patch," a direct voice contact over an ordinary phone.

To set up such a contact, Doyle calls up the Milwaukee party, then plugs his telephone jack into a contrivance between his receiver and transmitter. The ensuing conversation often lasts an hour or more.

He's set up 28 such conversations for a party in Waukeasha. They lasted more than 30 hours altogether. Newborn babies, the family's health and greetings are the usual topics.

Doyle, who spends 10 to 20 hours a week at the elaborate set in his basement den, is a member and officer in the American Radio Relay League, membership 200,000 including some 4,000 to 5,000 Wisconsinites.

When his night's work, or fun, is over, Doyle pats his pair of Scotch terriers, which have only blinked occasionally at the proceedings and listened not at all, and signs off: "W-9-G-P-I . . . 73-73-73." The 73 in radio parlance is "best regards" and all equivalent felicitations.

The den is then left to Julius



HAM OPERATOR JACK DOYLE WITH STUFFED PENGUIN G